



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT[®]
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ENGAGING IN THE 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS

YMCAs can play a role in making sure the communities they serve are properly represented in the Census by “getting out the count” and, most importantly, reaching into what is known as “hard to count” or “traditionally undercounted” communities.

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WHAT IS THE U.S. CENSUS?

Every 10 years, the United States government conducts the Census — a national accounting of everyone living in every state. This crucial exercise not only helps to create accurate population numbers but determines the allocation of hundreds of millions of federal dollars, where new infrastructure is built, and what kind of representation each locale has in elections at every level. In short, it's vital to ensuring a representational democracy is exactly that — representational.

WHY SHOULD THE Y PARTICIPATE IN CENSUS EFFORTS?

Location: Many Ys are in areas where there are hard to count populations

Access: Ys have everyday contact with communities most at risk of being undercounted. Without inventing a new program, Ys can provide basic information to those who pass through their doors on how and why to participate in the Census.

Trust: Ys have trusting relationships with the communities they serve and can act as powerful vehicles for education about the importance of Census participation. When the message to be counted comes from a trusted entity, people are more likely to participate.

Multilingual: Ys connect to a range of constituencies and cultures, often serving communities who speak languages other than English. Ys can provide access to Census education materials in their communities' languages.

Visibility: Ys are out in the community at events, meetings and everywhere people live, work and play.

A Vested Interest: The Y's commitment to social responsibility drives our motivation to ensure that our communities have access to the funds, services, representation and physical and social infrastructure impacted by the census count. As an organization that strives to encourage civic engagement

WHO IS HARD TO COUNT?

The Census Bureau recognizes a range of sociodemographic and other groups as hard-to-count. The following persons are at risk of being undercounted in the 2020 census. These individuals are considered hard-to-locate; hard-to-contact; hard-to-persuade; and/or hard-to-interview.

- Young children
- Highly mobile persons
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Non-English speakers
- Low income persons
- Persons experiencing homelessness
- Undocumented immigrants
- Persons who distrust the government
- LGBTQ persons
- Persons with mental or physical disabilities
- Persons who do not live in traditional housing

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The Census is a snapshot of your community that defines the challenges and opportunities ahead for your Y and the people you serve and engage.

Every person counted — or not counted — in a community impacts ten years of federal funds, political representation, public infrastructure and private investment.

Funding

Census data is used to determine allocation of critical funding that nonprofits and those you serve and engage rely on, including:

- Community Development Block Grants
- Head Start
- Title I Education funds and grants for special and vocational education
- Medicaid and maternal and child health programs
- Transit programs
- Public housing assistance

Political Representation

Census numbers are used to determine political boundaries, including:

- 435 Congressional Districts
- 1,971 State Senate districts
- 5,411 State House districts
- Districts for City Councils, School Committees, County Boards

Public Infrastructure

Governments use census numbers to locate vital public works such as:

- Schools
- Health Centers
- Public Transportation and Highways
- Affordable Housing

Private Investment

- Businesses large and small use census numbers to:
- Identify new markets
- Select sites for operations
- Make investment decisions
- Determine the goods and services offered

WHAT YOUR Y CAN DO

To Start

- Assign a staff person or volunteer as your nonprofit's census liaison
- Learn about the census – timeline, impact
- Discuss at a staff meeting
- Discuss at a board meeting
- Learn about the areas of your community that are hard-to-count
- Discuss opportunities with your current funders for grants to support get-out-the-count in your community
- Look for other grant opportunities through your state or community foundations
- Contact your local or regional census office about partnering
- Advertise U.S. Census Bureau job opportunities
- Contact your city and/or county about local complete count committees

Meeting with Census Partnership Specialists

The Census Bureau has Partnership Specialists on staff dedicated to helping you ensure that your clients and community get counted. Partnership specialists can help you become a census partner and connect you with the tools and resources that you need to conduct effective census outreach. Here are some tips for making your meeting with a partnership specialist effective.

Connect: To get started, call your U.S. Census Bureau Regional Office and ask for the contact information for the partnership specialist serving your community. You can find contact information for your Regional Office by going to <https://www.census.gov/regions> and finding your state in the map provided.

Ask: Keep these questions and ideas in mind when you are meeting with the partnership specialist:

- What other nonprofit organizations are doing census outreach in your area? You may find that you have relationships with these organizations and be able to collaborate with them. Or, you may have ideas for other organizations the partnership specialist may want to reach out to.
- Does the census have any outreach plans specific to the community your organization serves? Are there materials available designed to reach out to your clients?

- Are there any other resources available to support your census outreach work?

Offer: You don't need to make any specific commitments right away to your census partnership specialist, but be ready to give them an idea of the types of census outreach activities your organization would be interested in. Examples include:

- Hanging a poster in your lobby
- Have your membership specialists ask clients if they have completed their census
- Provide a computer for clients to use when completing their census form online
- Give census buttons to staff to wear
- Include census information in your e-newsletter, website, and other organizational communications
- Participate in a Local Complete Count Committee
- Provide volunteers for census events
- Promote census job opportunities/host census job fair in partnership with U.S. Census Bureau

SUPPORTING THE CENSUS THROUGH YMCA PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

Many Y programs include individuals who are included in the hard to count categories. Consider implementing some of the strategies above, or other strategies, in the following programs to help ensure a complete count:

- Early childhood education
- Afterschool
- Teen program
- Job training programs
- New American Welcome Centers
- Anti-Hunger/afterschool meal/snack programs
- Safety Around Water
- Social Service programs
- Welcoming Week
- Healthy Kids Day

GLOSSARY

The following are terms frequently used when discussing the 2020 Census:

American Community Survey (ASC) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people. Through the ACS, we know more about jobs and occupations, educational attainment, veterans, whether people own or rent their homes, and other topics. Public officials, planners, and business use this information to assess the past and plan the future.

Apportionment is one of the most important functions of the decennial census. Apportionment measures the population so that seats in the U.S. House of Representatives can be correctly divided among the states.

Complete Count Committees are tribal, state, and local governments working together with community leaders to promote and encourage response to the 2020 Census in their communities.

Decennial Census is conducted every 10 years by the census bureau to determine the number of people living in the United States.

Group quarters are large facilities such as nursing homes, military barracks, college dorms, group homes, and prisons. Group quarters are counted separately by the census on designated days.

Hard to Count refers to people and communities that have historically been missed by the census. Hard-to-count populations include but are not limited to communities of color, immigrants, low-income households, and young-children.

Internet First refers to the census bureau's plan to leverage the internet to make it easier for people to respond to the 2020 census while also offering paper and telephone response options.

Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA) is the only opportunity offered to tribal, state, and local governments to review and comment on the U.S. Census Bureau's residential address list for their jurisdiction prior to the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census.

Partnership specialists are census employees who develop presentations, give briefings, conduct meetings and promote partnerships with various governments, local businesses and community groups.

Redistricting is the changing of legislative and Congressional boundaries according to census counts in accordance with the principle of one person, one vote set as the constitutional standard by the Supreme Court in the 1960s.

Service-Based Enumeration (SBE) provides an opportunity for people without conventional housing or people experiencing homelessness to be included in the census by enumerating them at places where they receive services or at pre-identified outdoor locations.

Thank you to Nonprofit Vote for providing content for this toolkit.

 Nonprofit VOTE